



## Pronunciation Assessment

<b>Name</b>	XXXXXXXX (confidential)
<b>Date</b>	January 9, 2020
<b>Native Language</b>	Malayalam
<b>Pronunciation Goal</b>	XXXXX's main concern is public speaking. He wants to reduce the anxiety of speaking to small and large groups, whether it's at work or at conferences. He would also like to address accent reduction issues as well, to supplement the self-study he is doing online.
<b>Suggested Package</b>	8 Hours – Speech Coaching

### SUMMARY

#### Intelligibility Rating\*

- 1 = Negligible difference from Standard American English (SAE)
- 2 = Slight accent but completely/mostly intelligible**
- 3 = Distinct accent but mostly intelligible (occasionally need to listen more than once)
- 4 = Significant degree of accent, sometimes/often not understood
- 5 = Very strong accent, often/always impossible to understand

\*Excerpted from "Comprehensive Assessment of Foreign Accented English" © 2011 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Overall, XXXXX's pronunciation is very good. I could understand nearly everything he said with no problem. He pronounced most of the individual notes (the vowels and consonants of English) correctly or fairly close to native American English.

The biggest challenge to XXXXX's spoken English is not the individual notes, but the "music" and fluency of his English. These challenges include:

- Insufficient stress on syllables and words (in particular, not using enough rising pitch.)
- Under-using pauses to slow his speech and break it into logical chunks.

- Using too much “filler” language (“um” and “uh”.)
- Occasional use of “upspeak” (rising intonation at the end of a sentence.)

All of the above reduce XXXXX’s impact as a speaker. By addressing these issues, he will sound more authoritative, confident, and dynamic.

Finally, XXXXX made some grammar and vocabulary errors. I included them in the detailed report below. The Pronunciation Package will not specifically address these errors, but I wanted to be sure that XXXXX was aware of them.

### **PRIORITIES: WHAT WE WILL COVER IN OUR SESSIONS**

Here are the suggested topics for XXXXX’s custom pronunciation course. These topics may change as I hear him speak more. **Please see the report starting on page 3 for details.**

#### **1. “Music”: Stress, Intonation**

- **Pace/Pausing/Thought Groups.** Knowing when and how to use appropriate pace, pauses and thought groups. This will help make XXXXX’s spoken English more dynamic. It will also reduce the filler words, thereby increasing his fluency.
- **Syllable Stress.** There are 3 elements to syllable stress in English: pitch, length and volume. We need to make sure XXXXX is using all 3 elements, especially pitch.
- **Stress on Contrast/Special Emphasis Words.** In general, XXXXX’s English will have a greater impact on listeners if he uses more stress for special emphasis words (such as contrast words: I have “good” and “bad” news.)
- **Up-speak.** Sometimes, XXXXX uses “up-speak”, a rising intonation at the end of utterances (sentences, series, or thought groups.) While up-speak is very common in conversational English, particular among younger people, it can make the speaker sound tentative because their statements sound like questions.

#### **2. Fluency**

- **Content Organization.** To add fluency and reduce filler words, we will review some effective ways to add structure to spoken English.

#### **3. Individual Sounds (Vowels / Consonants)**

- **/w/ vs /v/.** A common error for speakers of Dravidian languages (such as Malayalam), is to pronounce the “w” as “v”. XXXXX rarely makes this mistake! But I want to review the couple of words where he used the “v” instead of the “w” so he can practice this in his self-study online.

- **DETAILED REPORT – The most important/ frequent problems are highlighted**

## 1. SEGMENTALS [INDIVIDUAL “NOTES”]

### Vowels (Incorrect Pronunciation):

Symbol		Examples			Examples
/i/ →			/u/ →		
/ɪ/ →			/ə/ →		
/eɪ/ →			/aɪ/ →		
/ɛ/ →			/aʊ/ →		
/æ/ →			/ɔɪ/ →		
/ɑ/ →			/ʌ/		
/ə/ →	/oʊ/	to (when used as function word)	Vowels before /l/		
/ɔ/ →			Vowels before /r/		
/oʊ/ →			Others		
/ɔ/ →					

### Consonants (Incorrect Pronunciation or Omission)

Voiceless	Initial or Medial	Examples	Final	Examples
/p/ →				
/t/ →				
/k/ →				
/f/ →				
/h/ →				
/θ/ →	/t/	three		
/s/ →				
/ʃ/ →				

/tʃ/ →				
<b>Voiced</b>	<b>Initial or Medial</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Final</b>	<b>Examples</b>
/b/ →				
/d/ →				
/g/ →				
/v/ →				
/w/ →	/v/	away, way		
/ð/ →	/d/ - but often correct	the, this, that		
/z/ →				
/ʒ/ →				
/dʒ/ →				
/y/	∅	yet		
<b>Nasals</b>	<b>Initial or Medial</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Final</b>	<b>Examples</b>
/m/ →				
/n/ →				
/ŋ/ →				
<b>/l/ and /r/</b>	<b>Initial or Medial</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Final</b>	<b>Examples</b>
/l/ →				
/l/ in clusters →				
/r/ →				
/r/ in clusters →	/r/ (trill) – but often correct	Rockefeller, Harriman, railroad		

<b>Other Consonant Problems</b>		<b>Examples</b>
<ed> ending is omitted or mispronounced		

/s/ ending is omitted or mispronounced		
Initial voiceless stops are not aspirated		
Final voiced consonants are often voiceless		
Medial or Final consonants are often omitted or weak		
Many problems with consonant groups		
Pronunciation of:		

## 2. SUPRASEGMENTALS [THE MUSIC OF ENGLISH]

Stress Placement		Examples
Stress on the wrong syllable of a word	x	herself (should be herSELF); fortune (should be FORTune) – pronounced correctly the first time but wrong the second time
Stress on the wrong syllable of a compound noun		
Stress on the wrong word of a two word verb		building up (should be BUILDing up)
Function words are stressed	x	only the word “to”

Vowel Reduction		Examples
Unstressed vowels are not reduced		
Function words are not reduced		
/h/ is not reduced in function words		
Can't =can _____		

Rhythm, Length and Timing		Examples
Too even – all syllables are nearly the same length	x	XXXXX usually stresses the correct syllable, but there is often not enough rise in pitch. That can make his speech sound a bit monotone or like a burst of language, instead of more varied and deliberate.
Stressed syllables are too short		

Stressed syllables are too long		
Stressed vowels before voiced consonants are too short		
Unstressed vowels are too short or omitted		
Syllables in long words are mispronounced or omitted		
Too fast		
Too slow		
Irregular rhythm (speeds up and slows down)		

Linking and Pausing		Examples
Choppy: Words are not smoothly linked within phrases		
Glottal stop is inserted before vowels		
Glottal stop is inserted at ends of words		
Final consonants are released or aspirated		
/ə/ or /ɛ/ is inserted in consonant groups or between words		
Sloppy: Words are slurred or excessively run together		
/d/ or /t/ between vowels is excessively weakened		
Poor phrasing and pausing	x	Many times, XXXXX's phrasing is fine. But for public speaking, his speech would be helped by using more thought groups (pauses). This will reduce the sense of rambling, rushing, and/or lack of fluency, and make his communication more direct and authoritative.
Not fluent in reading aloud		
Not fluent and/or accurate in speaking freely	x	Very heavy use of filler words: "yeah", "basically", "um", "uh".  There were some small mistakes, as well, which I am pointing out for XXXXX's benefit:  <b>FAMILY QUESTION</b> - Grammar: "She <b>have</b> a son" (should be she <b>has</b> a

		<p>son)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grammar: “I moved to United States” should be “I moved to <b>the</b> United States”.</li> <li>- Vocabulary: “We <b>stay</b> here in El Sobrante”; (should be “We <b>live</b> here in El Sobrante”) “They <b>stay</b> 10 minutes <b>far</b> from our place” (should be “They <b>live</b> 10 minutes <b>from</b> our place.” Or “They <b>live</b> 10 minutes <b>away</b> from our place.”</li> </ul> <p><b>CHILDHOOD MEMORY QUESTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocabulary: “<b>Homely</b>”, as in “<b>homely</b> food”. In the UK, “<b>homely</b>” is correct. But in the U.S., “<b>homely</b>” means “<b>ugly</b>” or “<b>plain</b>”. For food or meals, we say “<b>homemade</b>” or “<b>home-cooked.</b>”</li> <li>- Vocabulary: “<b>comfortness</b>” is not a word. It’s “<b>comfort</b>”.</li> </ul>
Other problems with rhythm		

Intonation: Location of Sentence Stress (the major rise or fall)		Examples
Sentence stress on the wrong word		
Often falls at the beginning of sentence		
Often falls on adjectives instead of nouns		
Does not shift for contrast or emphasis	x	To make XXXXX’s speech more dynamic, more stress should be added for emphasis or contrast (words like <i>most, a lot, not</i> ).
Too many sentence stresses (too many rises and falls)		
No clear sentence stress (flat, narrow pitch range)	x	See directly above.
<b>Intonation: Pitch Pattern-Problems with:</b>		
Fall in statements		
Doesn’t jump up enough before falling		
Rises instead of jumping before falling		
Doesn’t fall enough on one syllable words		
Doesn’t fall low enough		

at end of sentence		
Fall in information (“WH”) questions		
Rise in “yes-no” questions		
Rise before a pause, series or end of sentence/thought.	x	This is “up-speak”. Sometimes it is appropriate. But sometimes, up-speak makes the speaker sound unsure of themselves. It can also contribute to a rambling quality because it is not clear where the sentences end. Examples (from family question) “Australia” ... “son” ... “family” ... “United States” ... “house” ... “place”
Rise in a series		
Rise in direct address		
Pitch pattern in choice (“or”) questions		
Jumps up and down; doesn’t fall and rise smoothly		
Monotonous when reading & speaking	x	Sometimes, due to lack of stress for contrast noted above.
Not loud enough		
Other problems with intonation		

Source: Dauer, Rebecca M., “Accurate English: A Complete Course in Pronunciation,” Prentice Hall Regents, 1993.